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RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1970  
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0929  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
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RUEKJCS/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
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RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001173

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/26/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: GON ISSUES AMNESTY DECREE FOR NIGER DELTA  
"MILITANTS"

REF: A. IIR 6 871 0114 09 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. ABUJA 1132

[1](#)C. IIR 6 871 0113 09

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter N.S. Pflaumer for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On June 25, after several hours of discussion with the Council of State (COS -- a constitutionally established consultative body of over 50, including the VP, Chief Justice, all former Heads of State, all serving state governors and other senior officials) President Umaru Yar'Adua signed a proclamation offering amnesty (formally described as a pardon) to Niger Delta militants who agreed to surrender their weapons, formally renounce militancy, presenting themselves for this purpose at one of the centers being established for this purpose in each of the Delta states. Militants will have until October 4 to either accept the amnesty or be branded as common criminals. Details of a package of training, education and rehabilitation measures are to be announced on June 26, but are believed to be similar to those described in Ref. A IIR. On-trial militant leader Henry Okah clearly falls within the range of this amnesty. Another former Delta militant leader, Dokubo Asari, who was briefly detained by the State Security Service while arriving at Lagos airport on June 23, would presumably be covered as well. We will need to see just how serious the GON is about implementation; what the modalities are; whether "militant" types (keeping in mind that some of the Delta lawlessness is pure criminality) buy in; and whether a real political and developmental framework follows to address the fundamental issues in the Delta. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) In his amnesty proclamation, President Yar'Adua said that after due consultation with the COS and in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by the provisions of Section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, "I hereby grant amnesty and unconditional pardon to all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in the commission of offences associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta;

The pardon shall take effect upon the surrender and handing over of all equipment, weapons, arms and ammunition and execution of the renunciation of Militancy Forms specified in the schedule hereto, by the affected persons at the nearest collection centre established for the purpose of Government

in each of the Niger Delta States;

The unconditional pardon granted pursuant to this proclamation shall extend to all persons presently being prosecuted for offences associated with militant activities; and

This proclamation shall cease to have effect from Sunday, 4th October 2009".

13. (SBU) Commenting to the media after he signed the proclamation, Yar'Adua said: "The offer of amnesty is predicated on the willingness and readiness of the militants to give up illegal arms in their possession, completely renounce militancy in all its ramifications unconditionally, and depose to an undertaking to this effect." Yar'Adua caused some confusion by adding that "the offer of amnesty is open to all militants for a period of sixty days." (Note: We presume this was merely a slip of the tongue, as there are one hundred days, not sixty, between now and October 4th.)

14. (C) Details of a promised rehabilitation program are not to be made public until later on June 26, but are believed to be along the lines of those described in Ref. A IIR (which appears identical to the June 20 piece in online publication Sahara Reporters, which is described in Ref. B), and are expected to include long term peace building initiatives to fund educational programs and stimulate employment in the Delta region.

15. (C) The provisions of the amnesty would appear to apply to

ABUJA 00001173 002 OF 002

Henry Okah, one of the alleged leaders of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) who is currently the subject of a secret trial for treason and arms smuggling.

Observers note, however, that it is less clear whether or not they would apply to those whose names were included on what has been described as a "guest list" found in one of the camps of militant leader Tompolo when it was captured in mid-May during the Joint Task Force's offensive in the area. According to Ref. C IIR, those included on the list are:

1. James Ibori, former Governor Delta State

2. Goodluck Jonathan, Vice-President and former Governor Bayelsa State

3. Emmanuel Uduaghan, Governor Delta State

4. Diepreye S.P. Alamieyesegha, former Governor Bayelsa State

5. Ovie Omo Agege, former Secretary to Delta State Governor

6. Owoye Andrew Azazi, former Chief of Defense Staff

7. Name deleted

8. Godsdan Orubebe, Minister of State for Niger Delta Affairs

9. Ibrahim Oghohi, former Chief of Defense Intelligence

16. (S//NF) According to the senior level GON official who was the source of Ref. C, the seventh name on the list, which has been removed, was National Security Advisor Sarki Mukhtar, whose name was deleted by NSA staff to avoid political embarrassment. Most of the above names (other than Mukhtar) are also mentioned in the June 20 Sahara Reporters article.

17. (C) Comment: It will take a few days for the full details of the rehabilitation and resettlement package are made known, and for key militant leaders have a chance to react to them. Until then, it will not be clear whether this proposal stands any chance to get off the ground. Too many military officers, national politicians, Delta politicians, militant leaders and community leaders are making money from the current situation, and will want to thwart any attempt to "fix" the Delta by accepting and supporting this amnesty or anything else. End comment.  
SANDERS